

TROUBADOUR

The Newsletter of St. Francis House, New London, Connecticut



Summer 2013

Vol. 15, No. 2

+++++

WALKING FOR PEACE

by Joanne Sheehan

It began with a walk. In June 1960, a group of people opposed to preparations for nuclear war walked from New York City to New London and Groton, Connecticut in opposition to the construction of Polaris submarines at Electric Boat in Groton. Organized by the Committee for Nonviolent Action, their summer-long campaign was called Polaris Action.

At the end of that summer the Committee for Nonviolent Action (CNVA) made two decisions that have had lasting impact. During the protests they were often told to, "Go tell it to the Russians." That fall they organized the San Francisco to Moscow Walk promoting unilateral nuclear disarmament. They also decided to stay in the area and continue their nonviolent work. They created the New England Community for Nonviolent Action and in the spring of 1962 they bought a farm in Voluntown, Connecticut from where they would work to develop community while continuing to organize walks. The Voluntown Peace Trust (VPT) continues to be a place where people and organizations working for nonviolence find community, resources and support, in part thanks to Emmett Jarrett.

Fr. Emmett Jarrett, co-founder of St. Francis House, played an important role in carrying on both walking for peace and developing community. As the enclosed letter from the St. Francis House board explains, Emmett became a Peace Pilgrim starting in 2006. Excerpts from his writings about these walks for peace are in this issue. Emmett's leadership as chair of the Voluntown Peace Trust board in 2007 came at a time when VPT needed a wise and steady head and gave us the ability to develop as a stronger community.

Walks have been an important tactic of nonviolent activists. One of Gandhi's most important campaigns in the struggle for an independent India was the Salt March, beginning with a walk to the sea. The Selma to Montgomery March led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But walks are much more than a nonviolent tactic. After Emmett's death on October 9, 2010, VPT wanted to find a special way to remember him. A labyrinth, an ancient spiritual path to walk, is now being created at the Voluntown Peace Trust. It will be dedicated on October 5, 2013.

Our work at the Voluntown Peace Trust is inspired by what Gandhi described as three elements of nonviolent social change: 1) personal development, or the individual's work to improve his or her own life through a meditative, spiritual practice; 2) constructive work to create the new society; and 3) the political practice of nonviolent action, resistance to direct and structural violence.

Walking the labyrinth is walking for peace. It is a space for meditation. A personal practice of non-violence strengthens us so that we can work on the other aspects of nonviolent social change. We need that balance. This is the legacy Emmett left to us.

Nonviolence and Climate Change is the present focus of our training work here at VPT. After discussions with nonviolence trainers and climate change organizers, we organized a full day Strategic Nonviolent Action Training in April, and we are developing plans for 2 to 3 more trainings this year plus organizing a Training for Nonviolence Trainers.

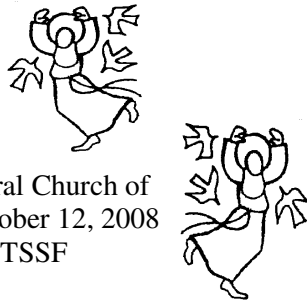
In the fall we plan to organize our second Community Peace Training with middle and high school students from New London. In addition, The Nature Connections program brings homeschooled children to the woods of VPT to learn about "the real world."

We've had an organic garden for 50 years. This year it is a community garden, with several VPT members and our caretaker Nancy Kwasnik sharing the half acre.

The Hartford Catholic Worker will again bring 40 young people from Hartford to participate in their Summer Program at Ahimsa during July and August. Youth counselors are an important part of the program and are selected because they have shown responsibility and leadership in the year through activities at the Hartford Catholic Worker.

Our thanks to St. Francis House for this special issue of the *Troubadour* highlighting the work we do and our development of the labyrinth in Emmett's honor and memory. Please join us in whatever way you can. Together we can make it possible for all to better walk in peace.

Joanne Sheehan chairs the VPT board. She is a non-violence trainer and regional organizer with the War Resisters League. Joanne organized the 1976 and 1977 walks listed in the CNVA Chronology on page 6.



WHY WE WALK

A Sermon preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston on Sunday, October 12, 2008
by the Rev. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

These people who have been turning the world upside down have now come here! (Acts! 7:6)

I am one of a number of pilgrims who are walking around southern New England this fall and I have come here today to do my small part to "turn the world upside down" by preaching peace....

My friend Eric Swanfeldt, a United Methodist minister from Uncasville, Conn., is the inspiration for the pilgrimage for peace. In the 1980's, during our country's proxy war against the Nicaraguan people's revolution — the Contra War — Eric walked around New England talking with Methodist congregations and persuading them to enter into a covenant with the Church in Nicaragua. In 2002, when our country invaded Afghanistan, Eric and I started a study group at St. Francis House, in New London, Conn., to encourage one another during the war fever that was building in our country. In 2006, Eric said, "It's time to stop talking and start walking." So we walked for two weeks around Connecticut in 2006 and 2007. This year we are walking for 43 days [and 800 miles] around southern New England. We walk because talk is not enough.

Our mutual friend Canon Ed Rodman reminded us in 2001, after the terrorist attack on the World

Trade Center and the Pentagon, that the 911 operator has a standard question when one phones the emergency number: "What is the nature of your emergency?" The nature of our emergency — as people, as a country, as Church — is that we have lost our way. We don't know who we are any more, and so we don't know where to go or what to do. The economy is a symbol of our situation. Every day we lose more and more of our value, and the end is not in sight. Our problem is, **We have forgotten how to be human!** Thomas Merton — poet, Trappist monk, and incisive writer about civil rights, war and peace, as well as Christian prayer — wrote a book in the early 1960's called *Raids on the Unspeakable*. He defined our nation's willingness to destroy the world with nuclear weapons to protect "our way of life" as just that — **unspeakable**. And Richard McSorley said long ago that once we have become willing to do that, all other moral questions are relative.

If you look at the history of the 20th century, it is the history of wars that failed to bring peace and security. It is also a history of nonviolent struggles that brought freedom to oppressed peoples around the world: India in 1947; South Africa in 1989; the countries dominated by the Soviet Union, including Russia, in the 1990's; and our own, on-going, Civil Rights movement. As we all know, our country did not make the nonviolent choice in 2001. The consequences of the choice our leaders made are not only endless war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and now northern Pakistan, but insecurity for Israel and Iran, nuclear expansion in India and Pakistan, and a new belligerence in Russia. Not to mention the fact that the U. S. is now upgrading and replacing its nuclear weapons arsenal with "reliable replacement warheads," and establishing new missile sites in Eastern Europe to defend against — Iran!...

The point is to understand the relationship between war as the preferred option of our country and the continued racism, militarism, poverty, materialism and moral failure among our people and around the world. And so some of us walk...

Jesus of Nazareth, whom we Christians call our Lord and Savior, walked all over his country, Palestine, teaching and healing, gathering disciples, listening to his people and sharing with them a vision of human life made human. He called it "the Kingdom of God." Martin Luther King, Jr. called it "the Beloved Community." All people everywhere catch a glimpse of this vision and desire to live in its beauty.

I invite you to walk — with us or with others — and learn what walking teaches: humility and courage. The Church — you and I — must not just talk. We must walk with Christ and the people to change the world.

SAINT FRANCIS HOUSE



Dear Friends:

We, the members of the board of St. Francis House, are delighted to support the initiative of the Voluntown Peace Trust to honor the long legacy of peace walks with the dedication of the Labyrinth at VPT in memory of Emmett. Emmett greatly enjoyed the three Peace Pilgrimages in which he participated. Those of you who would like to read his account of those walks can do so in the pages of *Broad Street Blues*. Two of those pilgrimages of up to 800 miles included stops at the Voluntown Peace Trust starting with the first one in 2006. In 2008 the pilgrimage included Emmett's preaching a sermon in Boston at the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. Paul entitled, "Why We Walk." Our Christmas *Troubadour* that year included the Peace Charter, a distillation of the themes and yearnings embodied in the conversations the walkers had with people in churches, synagogues and mosques who offered them hospitality along the way. And that issue also included Emmett's reflection, "How the Peace Pilgrimage Changed My Life."

It also seems fitting to have part of the work leading up to the dedication to include raising at least \$25,000 to pay off the mortgage. Our old friend Chuck Matthei of Equity Trust made half a million dollars available from their revolving loan fund when VPT was his home and the base of operations for Equity Trust. Equity Trust's loan fund was instrumental in the purchase of both the buildings that constitute St. Francis House here in New London. Our repayment of those loans led to the partnership between us and Equity Trust to develop a regional loan fund known as the Francis Fund for SE CT. The VPT debt is now held by the Cooperative Fund for New England and the loan fund of the Sisters of Mercy. So any contribution you can make will go back into supporting other community-based initiatives.

Emmett's commitment to the Voluntown Peace Trust was expressed in his willingness to undertake being the chair of the VPT board at a time of major transition in the management of this venerable movement-based property. And his last public act as a priest was to bless the peace pilgrims as they set out in the fall of 2010 just before he died. So we hope that many of you will participate in the October 5 Labyrinth Dedication in Voluntown. Contributions can be sent to us made out to "St. Francis House" with memo "VPT - In Memory of Emmett" and we will pass on a single check to VPT on October 5. We will gladly send anyone who asks for it a copy of *Broad Street Blues* with or without a donation! But do try to give generously and let your colleagues in ministry know of this opportunity to celebrate peace, honor Emmett and Keep on Walking!


Paul Jakoboski, TSSF


Anne Schelbner


The Rev. Norm Faramelli


The Rev. Ellen Adams, Deacon



Dr. Annie Brown


Reona Dyess


Bill Hossack


Debra Pennuto

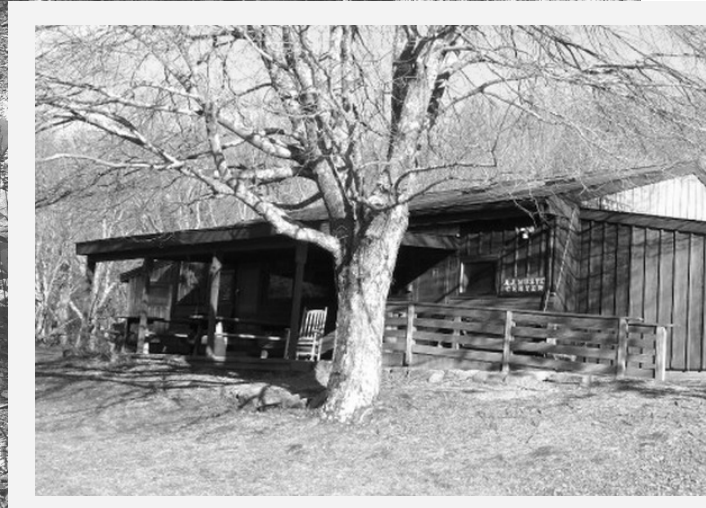

The Rev. Margaret Rose

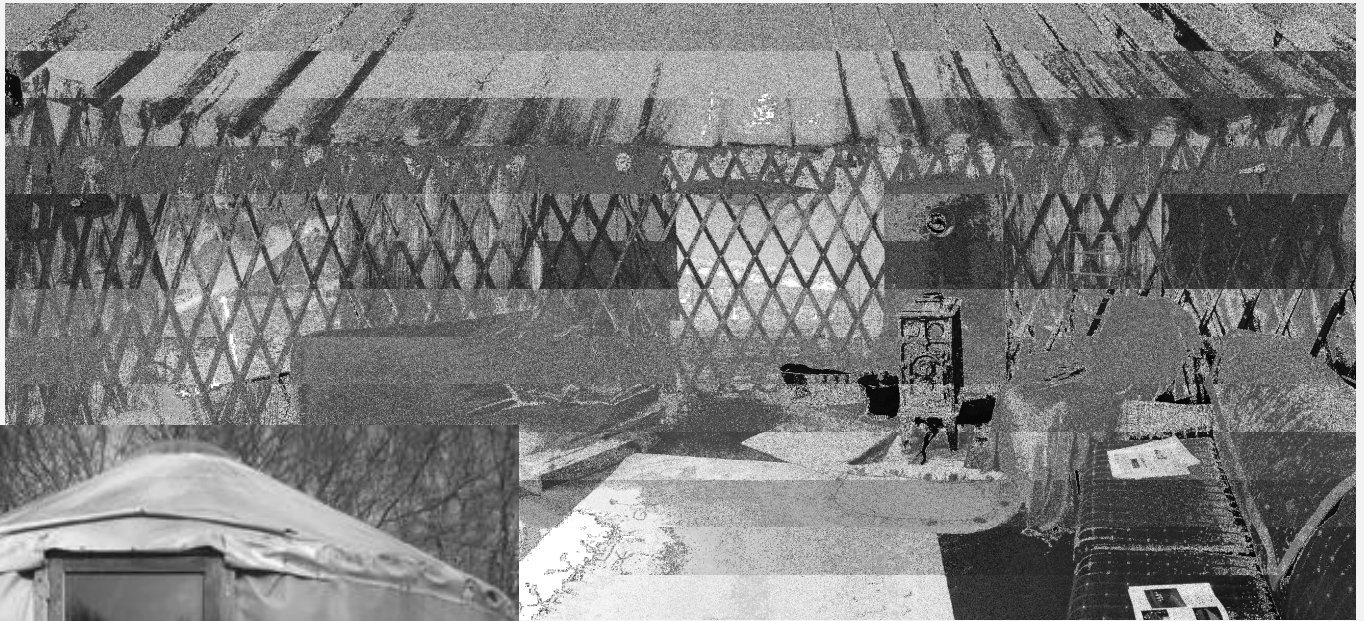

Owusu Slater, OEF


The Rev. Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF


Janice Syedullah, TSSF

Voluntown Peace Trust





Interior of the newly installed yurt at VPT (above) with VPT caretaker Nancy Kwasnik sitting on the steps (left). The yurt is the gift of Kit and Jane Johnson who have been active members of VPT and who have been doing a transitional year at St. Francis House.

Top left: The historic farm house is the site of the VPT Gandhi Library and the Welcome Center. VPT is used by a variety of social justice, church, peace and youth groups for conferences, workshops and weekend retreats as well as weddings.



The Labyrinth (left) is being developed in a wooded area behind the A.J. Muste Conference Center (above left). The rocks have been brought from the states walked by the Peace Pilgrims as well as from other significant sites.

The Swann-Corrie House (center) was designed by Bob Swann, one of the early residents of VPT, who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright. Ahimsa Lodge (right) is the site of the Hartford Catholic Worker July-August program for urban youth and is a good place for weekday respite as well as week/weekend rentals.

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE NEW ENGLAND COMMUNITY FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION WALKS

Records from CNVA newsletters

Researched by Beth McBride

- June 10, 1960: NYC to New London/Groton Walk starts Polaris Action, CNVA's first presence in the region.
- August, 1960: Hiroshima Day – Polaris Action Walk for Peace: NYC & Boston to New London.
- March 11, 1961: Commissioning day of Polaris Sub Abraham Lincoln, 3-Week Walk for Peace: Kittery, Maine to the UN in NYC arriving on Easter, April 2, 1961.
- December 1960- October 1961: San Francisco to Moscow Walk (aka Transcontinental Walk across the US). This walk was a response to the taunts of the workers at Electric Boat in Groton to, “Go tell it to the Russians.”
- August 5, 1961: Hiroshima Day Poster Walk through New London, followed by a vigil at Electric Boat and boat torch parade down the Thames River.
- April 22 - June 22, 1962: Nine Week Walk for Peace (aka Trident Walks since they came from 3 directions) – From Hanover, NH, Nashville, TN, and Chicago, IL to Washington, DC.
- May 1963 – October 1964: Quebec to Guantanamo Walk for Peace (aka Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Walk) – from Quebec through NYC, Washington, to Albany, Georgia where they spent time in jail and embarked on a 2 month campaign for mixed groups of Black and white people to gain the right to march and leaflet through the city, then to Key West, FL. They were stopped by the Coast Guard before they reached Cuba. The farm in Voluntown served as a staging area and second headquarters, many from there joined the walk at various points.
- May, 1963: Bill Moore Memorial Walk. Moore had indicated his intention to join the Guantanamo Walk just prior to being shot as he walked through Alabama carrying a sign that said, “Equal Rights for All.” On May 3, 1963, as the walk entered Alabama, New England CNVA staff member Eric Weinberger and nine others were arrested. Electric prods were used on Weinberger and two others. Barbara Deming, unable to join the male-only walk had accompanied them as a reporter.
- April 14-15, 1965: Thoreau Walk from Walden Pond to IRS in Boston to protest American military involvement in the war in Vietnam.
- August 6-9, 1966: Boston-Cape Cod Peace Walk as part of “International Days of Protest.”
- August 1966 : “Around-the-Clock Walk and Vigil.” In support of 17 year old Suzi Williams who was sentenced to 90 days in jail for refusing to stand for the judge in New London, four Boston CNVA staffers walked from Charles Street Jail in Boston (where Suzi had spent time in the Spring) to the State Jail at Montville, CT.
- March 25 – early May: Boston to Pentagon March for Peace. Arriving in NYC on April 15 for the Mass Mobilization to End the War then continuing to DC, arriving early May. Twenty arrested at Pentagon demonstration.
- May 31, 1967: John-I-Thin Stevens was arrested for draft refusal while at the farm for a reunion of Boston-Pentagon Walk for Peace at the farm .
- October 19-21, 1967: Long time CNVA organizer who lived at the peace farm Erica Enzer calls for Reunion of Boston-Pentagon walkers to go to Mobilization in D.C. to “keep your cool” and “act as marshals.”
- November 13-15, 1969: Memorial Death March – CNVA coordinates CT effort, seeking 1000 volunteers.
- April 14-15, 1970: Thoreau Walk – Walden Pond to Kennedy Plaza, Boston to “dramatize and protest misuse of tax dollars to promote militarism rather than to alleviate such pressing social problems as environmental pollution.”
- June 5-6, 1970: New Hampshire Peace Walk – Nashua, NH to Concord, MA – “to generate public pressure against United States military involvement in the internal and regional affairs of the countries of Southeast Asia.”
- January 20-21, 1971: Freedom Walk 1 – State Correctional Institute, Montville, CT to State Farm for Women, Niantic, CT in support of Bobby Seale, Chairman of the Black Panther Party and Ericka Huggins, member of Black Panther Party, who were imprisoned there while on trial in New Haven. CNVA activists were involved in defense work for this trial.
- March 1-6, 1971: Freedom Walk 2 – Niantic to New Haven. Same as above.
- January – December 1976: Continental Walk for Disarmament and Social Justice. Inspired by the San Francisco to Moscow Walk, six New England long distance walkers spent the summer of 1976 at Voluntown helping organize the New England route and then walking from Boston to Washington.
- May 1977: Millstone Nuclear Power Plant to Electric Boat, connecting nuclear power and nuclear weapons, was organized by the new community at Voluntown.

HOW THE PEACE PILGRIMAGE CHANGED MY LIFE

Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

Christmas 2008

Three years ago, before the first Pilgrimage for Peace, my friend Rabbi Aaron Rosenberg said: "Emmett, this is going to change your life." I had not expected him to say that, and I hadn't thought at all about whether a two-week walk around Connecticut would change much of anything, in my life or anywhere else....

(So) what have I learned? First, I think I have finally learned that the "bottom line," for me and for our country, is humility. We are not—and I am not—better or worse than other people. I have to share my life and we have to share God's earth with all God's children. And the "big things" I would like to do will be accomplished in small steps, by ordinary people working together in cities and towns, villages and farms, factories and forests, for our common goals.. St. Therese of Lisieux, "the Little Flower," spoke of a child-like spirituality, a "little way" of doing God's will, that all of us can practice. God will combine our small contributions into God's one big success.

Second, walking is a spiritual discipline. It's a way of becoming and remaining "grounded" in earth and our common humanity. When the eternal Word of God took human flesh in the Incarnation, God experienced what it's like to have sore feet and a tired body. When Jesus taught in Galilee and Jerusalem, he walked around a small country the size of southern New England. That was enough to change the world, and if we want to change the world, that is the way we will do it.

Third, most of the people of the world walk...When I walk, I am engaging in an act of solidarity with friends in the rest of the world...

Fourth, pilgrimage is not just a religious exercise—for Christians and Jews, Muslims and Hindus, Buddhists and others—it is a way of life. Pilgrimage is a perspective, a way of looking at the world, from the side of the road, not the inside of an automobile. Dorothy Day called her monthly column in *The Catholic Worker*, "On Pilgrimage." Pilgrimage is a way of life.

Fifth, I've begun to trust "the people." ... When we share a meal with people, take the time to be with people, we learn that they know things we didn't know they knew. People are smarter, more sophisticated, more generous than we give them credit for being. I hope our politicians can learn from Nicaraguan leaders and walk among the people—our people—and learn from them...



Photo by Tim Martin / Day File Photo

This photo of Emmett leading off the 2006 Peace Pilgrimage was reprinted as part of the coverage of his death in October, 2010. The scene is Bank Street in downtown New London close to the site of the original CNVA offices and the Hygenic Restaurant (now an art gallery) where the idea for the San Francisco to Moscow Walk was born over a cup of coffee.

SING ALLELUIA AND KEEP ON WALKING

Emmett Jarrett, TSSF Christmas 2007

"Sing Alleluia," wrote St. Augustine of Hippo in his Sermon 256, "and I keep on walking." This text is read in the Roman Breviary Office of Readings for the Saturday before Advent Sunday, the day before the Church begins a new liturgical year. We have walked, as it were, for the past year, and we are about to "keep on walking" for another year. And another and another. But we "sing Alleluia," even while we walk.

This text was much in my mind as we walked around Connecticut in September 2007 on the second annual Pilgrimage for Peace, and it is in my mind as we plan for a third pilgrimage in 2008. The concluding paragraph of the sermon says this:

So, [brothers and sisters], let us sing Alleluia, not in the enjoyment of heavenly rest, but to sweeten our toil. Sing as travelers sing along the road; but keep on walking. Solace your toil by singing - do not yield to idleness. Sing but keep on walking. What do I mean by "walking"? I mean, press on from good to better. The apostle says there are some who go from bad to worse. But if you press on, you keep on walking. Go forward then in virtue, in true faith and right conduct. Sing up - and keep on walking.....



**NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION**
U. S. Postage Paid
Permit # 122

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Telephone: (860) 437-8890

Email: stfrancishousenl@att.net

Website: www.stfrancishousenl.org

IN THIS ISSUE:

Joanne Sheehan, "Walking for Peace"

Excerpts from the *Troubadour* reflections
by the late Rev. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF:
"Why We Walk"
"Sing Alleluia and Keep on Walking"
"How the Peace Pilgrimage Changed My Life"

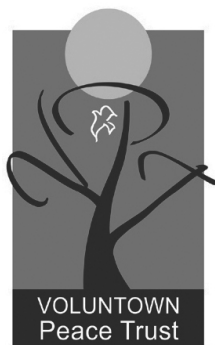
Letter from the Board of St. Francis House

Beth McBride, "Chronology of the CNVA Walks"

Center Section:

Photos of the Voluntown Peace Trust

Note: "TSSF" stands for "Tertiary of the Society of St. Francis" i.e. a member of the Third Order of Anglican franciscans. "OEF" stands for "Order of Ecumenical Franciscans."



*Join in the Celebration and
Dedication of the*

LABYRINTH

539 Beach Pond Road, Voluntown
Saturday, October 5, 2013

For more information
visit the VPT website!

www.voluntownpeacetrust.org

Donations can be made by sending a check or
money order to "St. Francis House." Memo
noting, "VPT-In Memory of Emmett"

